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ABSTRACT

The effect of social studies courses on post-high school political participation was studied. Data from two studies--"The National Longitudinal Study of the Class of 1972" and "The High School and Beyond Study of the Class of 1980"--were analyzed. A trichotomous measure of effective participation was used: those persons who engaged in no political activity; those who limited their participation to voting; and those who engaged in political activities other than voting, regardless of whether or not they voted. Results indicated that exposure to social studies courses at the high school level was not related to actual level of political participation seven years after high school. The study showed no differential effects on minority students. Finally, the study showed the pervasive influence that social class plays in the American political system. Youngsters from high socio- economic status (SES) households had a disproportionately higher chance to be enrolled in an academic program in high school and to be very active in extracurricular events than did students from middle and low SES homes. Political participation was strongly associated with both an academic program and extracurricular participation. (RM)

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Effective Participation:

A Standard for Social Science Education

A paper presented to the 1985 annual meeting of the Social Science Education Consortium, Racine, Wisconsin.

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A COMMITMENT TO CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Deep in the American concern for education is a commitment to the teaching of citizenship skills. This commitment is as old as public education. In fact, the founding and expansion of public schools was often justified on the grounds of creating an educated citizenry necessary for democracy.

Boorstin (1973) has argued that the free public high school was a distinctive American invention. He argues

> The new American institution in which the faith of the New Education became embodied and most widely diffused was the American high school. After 1890 the high school grew at a fantastic pace. While, as we have seen, in 1890 less than 7 percent of the nation's population aged 14 to 17 were in high school, by 1920 the figure had reached one third, by 1950 the figure was three quarters, and every year going up, until by 1970 the number was nearly 90 percent. The new American religion of education was becoming universal, and the high school was every citizen's place of worship. (p. 500)

The new high school movement forced a re-thinking of the purposes of education and of the curriculum. In 1918, the National Education Association adopted its Seven Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education. The principles -- or objectives -- of secondary education were to be, without regard to priority:

1. Health.
2. Command of fundamental processes.
3. Worthy home-membership.
4. Vocation.
5. Citizenship.
6. Worthy uses of leisure.

7. Ethical character.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers adopted the same set of Cardinal Principles and made them their national platform for several years thereafter.

THE SEARCH FOR A MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS

The search for measures of the effectiveness of these educational efforts is more recent. While Dewey (1916) and Merriam (1931) examined the kinds of materials included in social studies experiences in public schools and speculated about the potential impact of these experiences on the later exercise of citizenship, the empirical measurement of effects largely awaited work of Greenstein (1965), Hess and Torney (1967), Easton and Dennis (1969), and Jennings and Niemi (1974, 1981).

The studies of the elementary school years have tended to focus on the total school experience, from pledging allegience to the flag to affective attitudes toward national leaders. The extensive data collection program of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has provided some baseline measures of the levels of specific social and political information. The NAEP studies have also measured some attitudes toward future participation, but the data in this area are limited. Jennings and Niemi (1974) studied a national sample of high school students and their parents and concluded that the marginal impact of a high school civics course on political interest, political knowledge, or the disposition to participate in political activities was very small. They did,

however, conclude that civics courses had a differential effect on Black students.

While these studies have been very useful in evaluating the short-term impact of both specific courses and the more general school experience on the development of an expectation to participate or a predisposition toward it, there have been few efforts to empirically define and measure the longer-term impact of efforts at citizenship education. Jennings and Niemi (1981) followed their original sample of students and parents and reported on both aggregate change and changes attributable to education and other socio-economic variables. Due to the limited size of their sample, however, they were severely limited in the number of variables that could be examined simultaneously.

A DEFINITION OF EFFECTIVE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

It is clear that there is a long standing expectation that the public schools will provide instruction and experiences that will prepare and encourage young people to participate in the political system, at least to the point of voting regularly. Most of the studies have been cross-sectional in structure and have been limited to examining the student's disposition toward participation rather than actual participation. Only the Jennings and Niemi (1981) panel study has attempted to measure actual participation and they did not construct a single definition or measure of participation.

At this point, it is necessary to turn first to a disucssion of whether actual participation is an appropriate standard for assessing the effectiveness of social studies education. If we should conclude that this standard is appropriate, it will then be necessary to construct an appropriate measure and seek a data set to assess the relationship between social studies courses and actual participation.

As suggested by the title of this paper, I believe that actual participation in the political system should be the objective of social studies education and that modern statistical technologies allow us to identify the relative impact of social studies courses on subsequent political participation, holding constant differences in social and demographic conditions that are beyond the control of social studies educators. The argument over the adoption of actual particpation is not new to social science educators. Newmann (1975, 1981) has made a strong argument for both communal and political participation as a part of the school curriculum. Weissberg (1981) has argued that the American political system could not function with full political participation, reflecting in part the previous arguments of Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978) concerning the balance between political equality and political harmony. In general terms, I want to take Newmann's side of the argument, but for somewhat different reasons.

There is no fundamental disagreement with the proposition that a participatory -- or polyarchical -- political system

requires the active participation of some portion of its citizens. Otherwise, it would be an oligarchy by any name. The major point of contention has centered around the level of participation that is needed to preserve a polyarchical political system and to prevent the domination of the political system by any socio-economic stratum for its own purposes. While Weissberg is technically correct in asserting that the American political system would function very differently -- and perhaps less efficiently -- with full political participation, his argument misses the point of the American experience in the 20th century. Weissberg's argument is analogous to suggesting that the developed nations should moderate their donations of food to developing nations to avoid the known problems of obesity.

All of the available evidence indicates that the level of participation in the American political system has been declining for several decades, despite a significant growth in the level of education in the populace. Further, there is evidence that there has been some erosion of trust in the political system (Abramson, 1983). The time series data from the General Social Survey (Davis and Smith, 1984) show that public confidence in the leaders of the legislative and executive branches of the federal government has declined significantly over the last 13 years. In short, the prospect of full political participation does not appear to be a short-term problem for the American political system.

Beyond the issue of the desirable level of political participation, it is important to differentiate among several kinds of political participation. Almond and Verba (1963) identified a wide range of political attitudes and behaviors necessary for a civic culture, but Verba and Nie (1972) provided an operational differentiation of participation. Using a factor analysis of various kinds of participation, Verba and Nie were able to differentiate among persons who did not participate at all, those who limited their participation to voting, those who engaged in various electoral or campaign activities, and those who attempted to influence the system through contacting office holders about policy problems. Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978) found essentially the same factor structure in a comparative study of seven countries.

All of this work points to the importance of participation beyond voting. In his early work on the formulation of American foreign policy, Almond (1950) argued that most citizens do not follow every issue on the national agenda and that only about 10 per cent actually follow issues like foreign policy. Rosenau (1974) extended the argument to civil rights, and Miller (1983) has extended the model to science and technology policy. As a larger and larger proportion of political issues fall outside the electoral process and into normal legislative and executive channels, citizenship requires an understanding of the methods and opportunities for participation in the determination of non-electoral issues. Rosenau (1974) has referred to this as "citizenship between elections." I

believe that non-electoral participation is at least as important as voting and would argue for the inclusion of this facet of participation in any standard for evaluating social studies education.

In my view, the issue is not whether a social studies curriculum focused on increasing effective participation would result in excessive stress on the system, but rather whether it is possible through an improved social studies curriculum to stimulate enough particiation to stem the decline of recent decades and to help citizens understand how to maximize their desired outcomes and minimize their frustration. I find Newmann's more recent emphasis on participation in local political affairs (Newmann, 1981) to be appropriate. Too often, in my view, we have attempted to introduce children to the political system with units on world peace or world hunger, two of the most difficult and perplexing of issues faced by adult political leaders. Should we be surprised that youngsters decide that the process is futile?

A MEASURE OF EFFECTIVE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

To this point, I have argued that it is appropriate to use a standard of actual political participation in evaluating the impact of social studies courses and that effective participation requires some level of activity beyond voting periodically. It is now appropriate to ask how we might measure this kind of participation.

LaPalombara (1978) reviewed the participation literature and concluded that most of the scholars active in the study of participation would agree on the following points concerning a measure of political participation:

1. Empirical indicators of participation must involve action, not merely attitudes or feelings.
2. These activities must be voluntary, not coerced.
3. The activities must have some demonstrable relationship to the selection of rulers and to the making of public policies.
4. The activities include efforts designed to oppose policies of existing governmental powerholders and to replace those powerholders with others, usually but not exclusively through competitive elections.
5. Individuals engage in such activities as a matter of right and not privilege. (p. 170)

In the American context, it is important to include in our measure of political participation attendance at political speeches and rallies, signing petitions, making direct contact with a policy maker, or seeking to persuade one's fellow citizens to become interested in or active concerning a political issue or candidate.

Following the general typology developed by Verba and Nie (1972), I would propose a trichotomous measure of effective participation that would include

1. Those persons who engage in no political activity.

2. Those persons who limit their participation to voting.
3. Those persons who engage in political activities other than voting, regardless of whether or not they voted.

This ordinal measure of participation places the highest value of engaging in campaign or contacting behaviors. At the same time, the measure recognizes that voting by itself is a higher form of participation than simple abstension from all political activities.

Having defined a simple trichotomous measure of political participation, it is appropriate to inquire into the availability of a data set that has the necessary variables to allow assessment of the current levels of participation and the relative impact of social studies courses. The Jennings and Niemi panel data have all of the necessary variables, but it is limited to 1348 respondents at two points in time. Both the National Longitudinal Study of the Class of 1972 (NLS) and the High School and Beyond (HSB) study of the class of 1980 include the necessary measures.

Although not intended for this purpose, the NLS has collected a wide array of information necessary to identify the effects of selected high school experiences -- including social studies courses -- on subsequent political attitudes and behaviors. Sponsored by the U. S. Office of Education and the National Center for Educational Statistics, the NLS selected a national probability sample of approximately 18,000 high school seniors in the class of 1972 and collected an extensive

set of background information, high school curricular and course information, extracurricular activity, family information, and political attitudes and behaviors. The original sample has been followed since 1972 and four major data collections have occurred during that period.

While the NLS data provide an important opportunity to explore the effects of various high school experiences on later citizenship behavior, the size and complexity of the data set appears to have discouraged its analysis. A review of the published literature found no previous reports based on these data. This paper will employ those data to assess the relative impact of high school social studies courses on later political participation during the young adult years.

DO SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES LEAD TO PARTICIPATION?

To understand the impact of social studies courses on subsequent political participation, it is necessary to construct a multivariate model that includes other variables that are known or thought to influence political participation. The approach used will be comparable to that employed by Jennings and Niemi (1974), except that this analysis will utilize the log-linear methods described by Goodman (1972a, 1972b, 1978). I will first describe the variables included in the analysis and their measurement, then look at the structure of the multivariate model, employing path analytic techniques. Finally, I will utilize logit analyses to estimate the strength of the direct paths in each model.

VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS

The purpose of the analysis is to measure differences in political participation at a point in time approximately seven years after the senior year of high school. For this analysis, the dependent variable has been grouped into those respondents reporting no political activity at all (22 per cent), those reporting voting but no other political activities (30 per cent), and those reporting one or more political activities other than voting (48 per cent). The other political activities included in this measure were working in a campaign, contributing funds to a party or candidate, attending a political meeting or rally, trying to persuade others to vote for a particular candidate, or contacting a public official about a political issue. In subsequent analyses, this group of activities will be examined in separate component parts, but at this point in the analysis project, political participation is conceptualized and measured as a trichotomous variable.

The number of semesters of social studies courses taken was reported by each respondent during the senior year data collection and included courses taken during that year. As Jennings and Niemi (1974) have noted, American schools cannot be accused of not exposing students to a wide array of history and other social studies courses. For the purpose of this analysis, respondents were divided into those who had taken four or fewer semesters of social studies (37 per cent) and

those who had completed five or more semesters of social studies courses (63 per cent). In most school systems, the first two years of required social studies will include an American history course and a second course in history -- usually world history. Courses in American government, current political issues, sociology, economics, or psychology are usually reserved for the third or fourth course in a high school social studies program. By treating those respondents with five or more semesters of social studies as having a higher level of exposure, we are also focusing on course exposures more directly related to government or civics. This definition of levels of social studies courses is similar to, but not identical with, that used by Jennings and Niemi (1974).

A second high school variable concerns the kind of program the student completed. The NLS classified each student's program as academic, general, or vocational. In several preliminary analyses, the type of program was treated as a trichotomous variable, but the results included few differences between the general and vocational programs that were related to political participation, thus in the analysis reported herein, the type of high school program has been dichotomized into an academic program (41 per cent) versus all other types of programs (59 per cent).

A third high school variable included in this analysis is the level of extracurricular activities. At the time of the senior year data collection, each student was asked to indi-

cate whether he or she had participated in each of a list of high school extracurricular activities. The list of activities included interscholastic sports, intramural sports, subject matter clubs, year books, school newspapers, and hobby groups. The students in the study were grouped into those with no extracurricular activities (18 per cent), those with one to three activities (45 per cent) and those with four or more activities (37 per cent).

Apart from high school variables, the NLS collected a wide array of information from each high school senior about the education, occupation, and income of his or her parents. These data were used by the NLS to construct an index of socio-economic status (SES). Approximately 25 per cent of the students in the NLS sample were classified as coming from low SES homes, 50 per cent from middle SES homes, and the remaining 25 per cent from high SES homes. Given the strong association in the literature between adult SES and actual political participation (Almond and Verba, 1963; Verba and Nie, 1972), it is important to include this variable in the model.

Finally, given the conclusions of Jennings and Niemi (1974) concerning the differential impact of civics courses on Black high school students, race was included as a variable. For this analysis, Black, Hispanic, and other minority students were grouped as minority students and all other students were grouped as non-minority students. Jennings and Niemi were careful to note that their analysis was conducted on a relatively small number of Black students (N=186). The large

number of minority students included in the NLS (N=2,772) should allow a new investigation of this hypothesis.

A BASE MODEL

This analysis will involve two steps. The first step will seek to determine the effect of social studies class exposure on post-high school political participation, holding constant differences in type of high school program, level of participation in high school extracurricular activities, and parental SES. This analysis will also provide an estimate of the relative strength of each of the independent variables in predicting political participation.

The second step will involve the addition of race to the model. This analysis will allow a determination of the relative impact of social studies courses on minority and non-minority students and will allow an examination of the role of race in the larger structure of political participation.

It is appropriate to begin with an examination of the multivariate distribution of the data (see Table 1). Substantively, this distribution allows an examination or comparison of selected parts of the total study population. It is apparent that in most comparisons the differences are in the five to 10 point range, and that the impact of social studies courses is minimal. The table also demonstrates the value of working with large national samples like the NLS in which most of the cell comparisons are based on several hundred cases.

This multivariate distribution table will be the basis for all of the later statistical analyses.

To understand the influence of social studies courses on later political participation, it is essential to begin with an analysis of the structure of some of the major factors associated with participation. Using Goodman's (1978) methods, a path analysis was conducted, using the four independent variables described above. The results indicated that social studies courses did not have a direct association with subsequent political participation (see Figure 1). The path analysis found that the type of high school program, level of participation in extracurricular activities, and parental SES were all significantly associated with post-high school political participation.

Although this analysis has shown that social studies courses do not have a significant residual effect on subsequent political participation, it would be useful to know the relative strength of each of the other variables in the prediction of political participation. For this purpose, a logit analysis[1] will be utilized.

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[1] A logit analysis is analogous to a regression analysis, except that the logit analysis seeks to predict cell frequencies in contingency tables rather that individual case scores. The Coefficient of Multiple-Partial Determination (CMPD) is analogous to a Multiple R2 in a regression analysis. For more information about these techniques, consult Goodman (1972a, 1972b, 1978) or Fienberg (1977).

TABLE 1

Multivariate Distribution of Young Adult Political Participation

Parental SES	School Program	Extracur. Activities	Soc. Stud. Courses	Political Participation			
				None	Vote	Other	N
Low	Non-acad.	None	Low	34%	26%	40%	330
			High	41	23	36	440
		Some	Low	36	29	35	585
			High	34	27	39	913
		High	Low	27	31	42	369
			High	24	27	49	558
	Acad.	None	Low	20	35	45	49
			High	16	38	45	86
		Some	Low	21	30	50	155
			High	21	30	49	255
		High	Low	20	27	53	137
			High	15	28	57	244
Middle	Non-acad.	None	Low	32	28	41	409
			High	32	30	38	703
		Some	Low	26	31	43	881
			High	27	31	42	1508
		High	Low	19	34	47	645
			High	22	30	49	971
	Acad.	None	Low	22	35	43	113
			High	25	32	44	270
		Some	Low	20	35	44	464
			High	19	31	51	956
		High	Low	13	30	57	523
			High	14	29	57	921
High	Non-acad.	None	Low	26	28	46	127
			High	23	28	50	181
		Some	Low	22	35	43	302
			High	15	32	53	417
		High	Low	14	31	55	188
			High	15	33	53	307
	Acad.	None	Low	25	27	48	64
			High	18	34	48	164
		Some	Low	13	30	57	424
			High	15	29	56	758
		High	Low	10	30	60	506
			High	9	25	65	839

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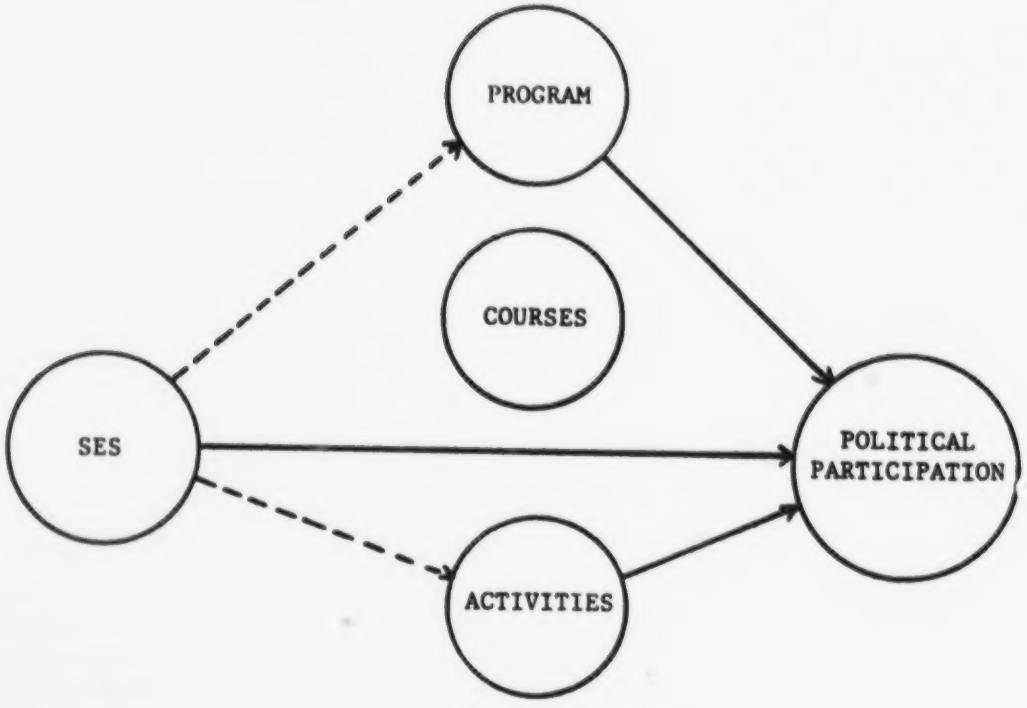

Figure 1: A Path Model to Predict Young Adult Political Participation

The logit analysis indicated that the level of participation in high school extracurricular activities accounted for approximately 22 per cent of the mutual dependence[3] in the analysis, with those students with a higher level of extracurricular activity being significantly more likely to vote and to engage in other forms of political participation (see Table 2). Similarly, the logit analysis found that students in an academic program were significantly more likely to vote and engage in other kinds of participatory activities than were students in general or vocational programs. The difference in type of program accounted for an additional 20 per cent of the mutual dependence in the analysis.

The logit analysis also indicated that parental SES accounted for an additional 20 per cent of the mutual dependence. Young adults from low SES households were significantly less likely to either vote or engage in other kinds of political activities than other young adults. Young adults from middle SES households voted at an average rate, but were significantly less likely to take part in any other political activities. In contrast, young people from high SES homes were significantly more likely to vote and to participate in non-electoral ways than other young people. In short, the

[3] Mutual dependence is a term suggested by Goodman to signify the amount of association or relationship between categorical variables. If two categorical variables are unrelated, we refer to them as being independent. Although mutual dependence may be viewed as analogous to variance in interval data, there are important technical differences and Goodman suggests that mutual dependence may be a useful term for this purpose. See Goodman (1978).

substantial relationship between SES and political participation found by Verba and Nie (1972) is confirmed by these data and these results suggest that this pattern is being effectively transmitted from generation to generation.

TABLE 2

Logit Models to Predict Young Adult Political Participation

MODEL		CMPD*
H1	Unique effect of social studies courses.	.009
H2	Unique effect of academic program.	.197
H3	Unique effect of extracurricular activities.	.222
H4	Unique effect of parental SES.	.201
H5	Total main effects.	.917

* CMPD = Coefficient of Multiple-Partial Determination.

Although the base model has demonstrated that social studies courses have no significant effect on later political participation by young adults, we have been able to construct a multivariate model of political participation that accounted for 91 per cent of the total mutual dependence in the analysis. The difference in the total of the four main effects and the simple sum of the four variables is that portion of the mutual dependence that is shared, or jointly predicted. If a stepwise analysis had been conducted, we would have been able to assign all of the mutual dependence explained to one of the

main effects, but the nature of this particular model does not suggest a clear ordering of the independent variables for a stepwise model.

In more substantive terms, this base model indicates that political participation seven years after high school is strongly influenced by enrollment in an academic (as opposed to general or vocational) program in high school, a high level of extracurricular activities during the high school years, and a higher-SES home. Looking back to the path analysis, however, those results showed that the selection of an academic program was strongly associated with a higher-SES home, as was a high level of participation in extracurricular high school activities. We can only conclude that the primary factor in the level of political participation amoung young adults in the socio-economic status of their parents, a variable the individual young person cannot influence or control.

THE EFFECT OF RACE

In their analysis of 1965 high school seniors, Jennings and Niemi (1974) found that exposure to a high school civics course did increase the interest in political events and the level of political knowledge among Black students, but that it decreased slightly their disposition toward actual participation. They hypothesized that as minority youngsters learned more about the system, they were likely to become more conscious of the difficulty in changing it and that this realiza-

tion might lead to the diminished disposition toward later participation.

The NLS study of the high school class of 1972 included a substantially larger number of students and thus the number of minority students included in the NLS study was accordingly larger. In fact, the NLS included an oversample of minority students to assure proper representation, although the weighted file used in this analysis has returned minority students to their proper proportion within the total 1972 high school senior population.

To study any possible influence of social studies courses that might be differentiated by race, the models used above were re-analyzed with race (dichotomized as minority and non-minority) entered into the model. The resulting path analysis found that the influence of social studies courses on political participation was still not significant, and that the interaction term for race and course effects on participation was not significant at the .01 level. If the race differential suggested by Jennings and Niemi were present in these national data, that interaction term should have been significant.

Although the path analysis did not find the same effect noted by Jennings and Niemi (1974), the analysis does provide some interesting and important insights into the influence of race in predicting young adult political participation. The path analysis indicated that minority students were significantly more likely to come from lower SES homes than non-mi-

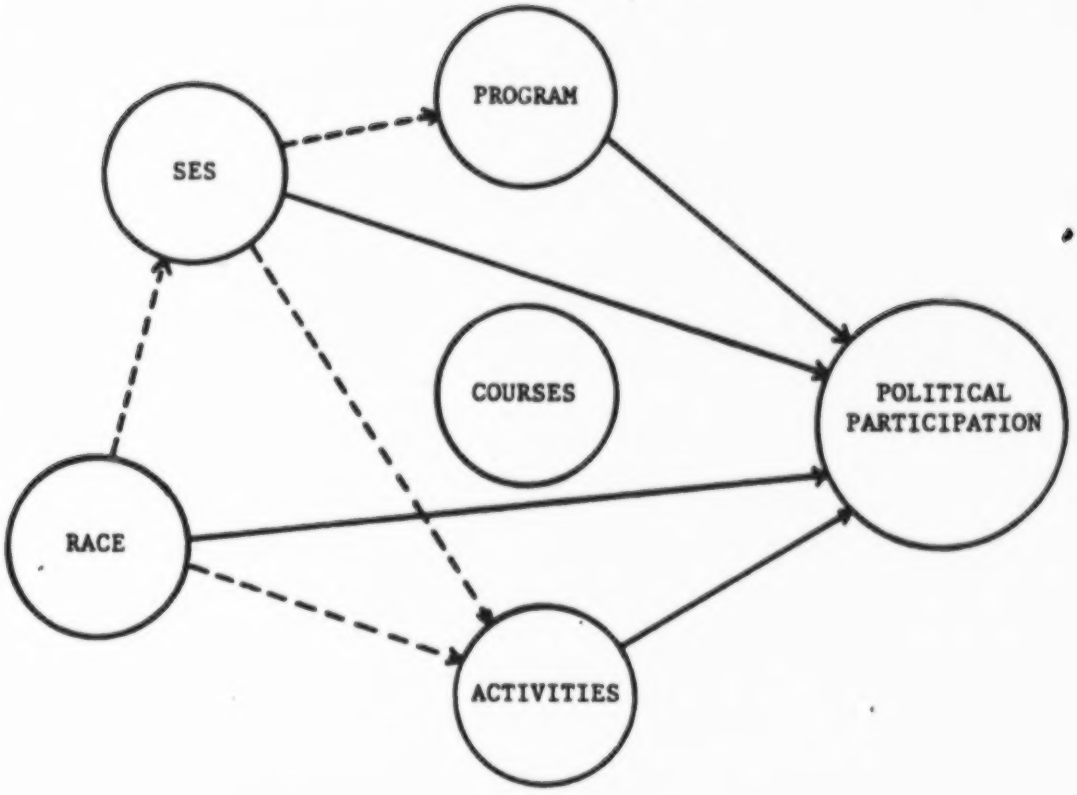

Figure 2: A Path Model to Predict Young Adult Political Participation, Controlling for Race

nority students, but that when parental SES was held constant, minority students were relatively more likely to participate at a high level in extracurricular activities than non-minority students.

The path analysis also found that race had a significant residual relationship with political participation, controlling for course exposure, academic program, extracurricular activities, and parental SES. The trichotomous character of our participation variable provided an interesting insight into the effect of race on political participation. Holding constant the other independent variables, minority students were significantly more likely than non-minority students to be either totally inactive or to participate in political activities other than voting, while non-minority students were more likely than minority students to vote and not engage in other political activities. This result points to a differential minority reaction to the majority political system. A disproportionately high share of minority students abstain from the political system, but those who do participate in the political system are more likely than non-minority participants to engage in a wider array of activities other than voting. This pattern of differential behavior, however, is not associated with exposure to social studies courses.

As with the base model, it is possible to utilize a set of logit analyses to determine the relative strength of each of these direct effects on political participation. Using the

same methods discussed above, the logit analysis found that the type of program accounted for about 16 per cent of the total mutual dependence, that the level of participation in extracurricular activities accounted for another 18 per cent, and that parental SES explained about 13 per cent of the mutual dependence (see Table 3). The residual effect of race accounted for about six per cent of the total mutual dependence in the analysis. The combined main effects produced a Coefficient of Multiple-Partial Determination (CMPD) of .784, which indicated that the model retained a high degree of predictive power. The reduction in predictive power from the base model is a reflection of the doubling of the number of cells in the multidimensional contingency table and the introduction of a relatively weak variable -- race -- into the analysis.

TABLE 3

Logit Models to Predict Young Adult Political Participation, Controlling for Race

MODEL		CMPD*
H1	Unique effect of social studies courses.	.008
H2	Unique effect of academic program.	.157
H3	Unique effect of extracurricular activities.	.179
H4	Unique effect of parental SES.	.133
H5	Unique effect of race.	.058
H6	Total main effects.	.784

* CMPD = Coefficient of Multiple-Partial Determination.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

On the basis of the foregoing analysis and discussion, five conclusions emerge. First, the American commitment to citizenship education is deep and long-standing. The persistent justification of public education -- and especially the free public high school -- on the grounds of citizenship education points to a belief that the process would result in actual changes in the behavior of citizens. The extension of the high school experience to virtually every young adult in our society implies a commitment to expand the influence of citizenship education to the full populace. There is no evidence that the commitment to citizenship education was to in-

crease knowledge per se or to increase what might be called feelings of political efficacy or difuse support. A reading of the original arguments for public education and for citizenship training wiithn that structure can leave little doubt but that the intent has always been to prepare citizens to actually participate in the American political system.

Second, the changing character of our society and our politics has modified the nature of political participation. Given the growing proportion of important political issues that are dealth with outside the electoral process and the increasing level of issue specialization, effective political participation now demands both a ability to make contacts with organizations and decision-makers and to understand the timing and points in the process when actions of this type might be most effective. While it is doubtful that each citizen can be expected develop strategic thinking skills in this respect, it would be desirable for each citizen to understand how the process works and to be able to recognize with groups and policy leaders are making appeals for direct participation of this type. Accordingly, the standard for the evaluation of social studies courses utilizes a measure of participation beyond the act of voting.

Third, the evidence indicates that exposure to social studies courses at the high school level was not related to the actual level of political participation seven years after high school. This result is generally consistent with the

previous findings of Jennings and Niemi (1974) and of others who have attempted to measure this effect empirically. Given the size of the NLS sample, however, this result is an important piece of evidence toward that conclusion.

Fourth, the differential effect on minority students posited by Jennings and Niemi (1974) does not appear in the NLS data. Jennings and Niemi concluded that exposure to a high school civics course increased the political interest and knowledge of minority students, but depressed their disposition toward participation. The absence of a significant interaction term indicated that the absence of a relationship between courses and participation was not differentiated by race. Jennings and Niemi were careful to note that their previous conclusions were based on only 168 respondents, thus this result based on 2,772 minority students and 13,970 non-minority students is far more compelling. The Jennings and Niemi conclusion has been repeated widely in the political socialization literature and it is appropriate to revise that conclusion.

Finally, the study of the two models points again to the pervasive influence of social class in the American political system. It is clear that youngsters from high SES households have a disproportionately higher chance to be enrolled in an academic program in high school and to be very active in the extracurricular events associated with high school than do young people from middle and low SES homes. Actual political

participation is, in turn, strongly associated with both an academic program and extracurricular participation, and with an additional residual effect from parental SES. Viewed in combination, the overall relationship between upper SES status and political participation is very strong.

In Participation in America, Verba and Nie conclude that:

> A major force leading to participation ... is associated with social status and the civic attitudes that accompany it. This skews the participant population in the direction of the more affluent, the better educated, those with higher-status occupations. Furthermore, most of the other forces that modify the workings of the standard socioeconomic model tend -- in the United States -- to accelerate its effects.... In sum, the standard socioeconomic model of the process of politicization works in America, resulting in an overrepresentation of upper-status groups in the participant population.

The preceding analysis of the NLS data suggests that the upper-SES domination of the political process found by Verba and Nie is being successfully transmitted to the next generation and that the social studies curriculum does not effectively impede that process.

These conclusions should not cause a cessation of efforts to build social studies curricula that stimulate effective participation in the political system. Rather, for those social scientists and educators who accept effective participaton as a standard for evaluating the results of social sciences curricula, these results should demonstrate the need for new approaches and new thinking. The curriculum in place in the 1960's and the 1970's -- which should have influenced the class of 1972 -- had no measurable effect. Granting the Ver-

ba, Nie, and Kim (1978) argument that full political equality can be obtained only at the cost of significant political disharmony, I believe that the evidence would support the view that the present socio-economic disparities in political participation and power could be reduced substantially without causing a dangerous level of stress in the political system. I believe that the values implicit in the American experience demand that we move toward that objective.

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